When considering together the needs of our programme and the bias of the publisher, we may have to compromise on one or both areas. Suppose that the only publishers of mastery learning/individualized for elementary English are Christian? We need to decide what's more important - the system or the bias. We then can either adapt the publisher's bias to our own and use his system, or choose one whose bias is more compatible and adapt the system. Adapting the bias requires strong Kṛṣṇa consciousness; adapting the system requires teaching expertise. It is best not to have to do too much adjusting of both for the same series of books!

See figures 6-1 and 6-2.

You can learn what options are available from various publishers by calling the principals of various types of schools in your area. If you are looking for a manipulative-based early mathematics program, you can make telephone calls until you find several schools that use such a program. Then talk to the classroom teacher to find the name of the publisher and her opinion of the material.

Educational conferences are another source of information about what materials are available. So are educational magazines, especially those for private and home schools. These often have a section where new material is reviewed, as well as advertisements from many publishers. Books, such as *The Big Book of Home Learning*, review many textbooks and related materials. Finally, you can request free catalogues from hundreds of companies, many of which are listed in Appendix A. Many companies, such as Bob Jones, have a toll-free number you can call to ask questions of the textbook authors.

It is important to personally review material before making a major purchase. We don't want to feel obliged to use something simply because we've spent Kṛṣṇa's money. Then you find better materials, storage rooms will fill with old textbooks in excellent condition which you can't sell. Review the material by asking for an examination copy. Sometimes large companies will send a free sample; by contrast, examination copies must be returned in excellent condition by a certain time if you don't want to use them. You can also contact a sales representative and ask him to bring sample texts to your school. By attending a conference where the publisher has an exhibit, you can review the material and ask questions of the representatives. If you find a local school that uses materials in which you are interested, you can often arrange to visit the classroom.

Consumable Textbooks

by Sītā Devī Dasi

In order to save money with consumable texts, I have purchased thick (but soft so as not to rip easily) transparent folders. I slip these folders over the page to be done and hold it in place with sturdy clip.

The child does the work with an oil based pencil (used for writing on glass and also called a "grease pencil" or china marker"). It is erased with alcohol. Then if the child makes mistakes, he can redo the exercise, or it can be reassigned for review. Plus the books can be used year after year.

The following adaptation from Mel Gabler's "Textbook Reviews" should help to support and clarify the above points.

1. The materials should teach the academic skills.

2. The materials should not be involved in the changing of values through questioning the beliefs, attitudes, feeling and emotions of students.

3. Materials should teach absolutes when

applicable, rather than using open-ended questions which force students to make premature value judgments under peer pressure, or to accept situation ethics.

4. Content should fairly represent differing views and positions: and avoid biased editorial judgments. Varied expressions of the same root philosophies should not be presented as opposing views.

5. There should be no attacks upon basic values such as parental authority or respect for law and order.

6. Materials should not condone immorality while ignoring morality.

7. A personal God, religion, and the Vedas should not be attacked or treated as myth.

8. Materials should not teach about occult topics without warning of its dangers.

9. Materials should teach evolution as theory rather than fact.

10. Materials should not subtly or grossly present a false view of society, such as intentional or artificial role reversal.

11. Content of materials should be encouraging and positive and should motivate students to excellence. Reading material should not stress realism from the negative aspects of depression, frustration, confusion, morbidness, crime, and violence.

The last point may need clarification if you've not had much exposure to modern educational materials. It is common for stories and examples in social studies, English, and some "critical thinking" textbooks to be very disturbing: graphic accounts of suicide, prostitution, street gangs, vandalism, and psychotic individuals. Sometimes this world view is apparent in word problems in a mathematics book, or sample sentences in a spelling text. Even a teacher who has been fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness for many years may find himself disturbed by the modes of passion and ignorance when reviewing such material.

The above are very real problems of most educational materials! While we light the fire of Kṛṣṇa consciousness with good teachers, spiritual motivation, and proper atmosphere, we can pour water with our educational materials. Be careful!

In summary, first determine your classroom structure and educational approach for each subject. Next, consider the experience of your teachers, and how much time they have for training or classroom preparation. Next, decide what type of materials will primarily assist the teacher: textbooks, manipulatives, audio or video tapes, or source books for the teacher's own notes. Find publishers/suppliers who sell the material that is best suited for your structure/approach/teachers.

Finally, personally review the material for bias, and its adherence to the eleven principles mentioned above.